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*Inside International Development Organisations:
Socially Constructing Judgement in-the-Moment*

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Abstract

This exploratory study aimed, first, to build new knowledge on how senior managers of international development organisations defined judgement and how they made sense of it in the context of their leadership roles and work environments. A secondary aim was to explore methodologies and methods, specifically unstructured interviews and observations, to be used in the PhD phase to study the social phenomenon of judgement. Using an ethnographic and reflexive approach, this study addressed the question: How do managers understand their use of judgement ‘in-the-moment’ in practice? Results from the two participating organisations suggest that there are diverse interpretations of the meaning of ‘judgement’; it is a socially constructed process; used in uncertain situations; and influenced by time and space. These findings contribute to our understanding of how judgement in-the-moment is perceived inside an understudied area: the everyday context of small international development organisations. Theoretically, this study complements the existing literature with a social constructionist perspective and draws linkages to judgement as a constitutive element of sensemaking. Methodologically, the reflexive approach taken builds awareness of examining the ‘multiple selves’ and how researchers influence their research and are influenced by it as subject and object. The validity, methodological issues, limitations and implications for future research are also discussed.

Chapter 1: Aims and objectives

I have gained a deep interest in the topic of judgement from my previous career as a coach and counsellor to rural entrepreneurs in a developing country. During this time, I became more self-aware of using my intuition and judgement in everyday interactions whilst working with colleagues and coaching clients. For example, I determined whether or not (and when) to probe further about an issue I thought sounded important but was not articulated. I made judgements to decide ‘what to do next’ after a client had informed me that she wanted to speak about one subject, but started our meeting speaking at length about something entirely different. What began as reflective learning for me grew to an investigative level; I wanted to know how other managers understood their judgement-making in day-to-day work situations. Before I could begin this project, I first needed to understand how scholars defined the term ‘judgement’ and then make a space for my research topic. My reasons for investigating this topic were three-fold:

1. Definitions of judgement vary, stemming from across disciplines in the social sciences and forming a field in its own right (Judgement and Decision Making [JDM]).
2. Limited literature from a reflexive perspective exists on managerial judgement in the everyday, mundane context of organisational life.
3. There is a lack of empirical studies in natural settings about managerial judgement in practice to make sense of ‘what to do next’.

The focus of this dissertation is on organisational leaders in decision-making positions and their use of judgement ‘in-the-moment’ as a way to guide or determine an action (or choice of actions) and their making sense of this whilst managing their organisations. The areas outside of the scope of this research were: moral or ethical judgement; social judgement theory, which focuses on how people weigh communicated messages in terms of acceptability; and passing judgement as a way of evaluating or criticising in terms of legitimacy or worth.

This project was a pilot study in the context of senior managers of UK-based international development organisations, a type of social enterprise. For the purposes of this study, the general definition of ‘social enterprise’ used was “an organization or venture that achieves its primary social or environmental mission using business methods” (Social Enterprise Alliance, 2011, www.se-alliance.org/what-is-social-enterprise). Organisations can be registered as non-profit, charity or for-profit and are not specific to any sector. As a former practitioner in social enterprises, this environment lent itself to both my interest and comfort in observing and interviewing members of two different organisations. The everyday life in these situations is

driven by resource constraints to address pressing social, economic and environmental issues in developing countries serving multiple stakeholders. For these organisations, judgements and decisions can lead to outcomes such as beneficiaries' improved livelihoods through access to education or healthcare or alleviating poverty, or improved relations with donors to continue operating. This social return on investment is distinct from publicly listed firms' primary obligations to financial return to their shareholders. How managers make sense of using their judgement in situations 'in-the-moment' is an understudied area thus far and even scarcer in the context of social enterprises.

The aims of this exploratory research were two-fold. First, it was to build new knowledge on how judgement is interpreted by practicing international development managers and how they made sense of it in the context of their leadership roles and work environments. Second, the aim was to explore methodologies and methods to be used in the PhD programme phase, specifically interviews and observations, to study the social phenomenon. This study addressed the question: How do managers understand their use of judgement 'in-the-moment' in practice?

The objectives were to answer this research question through a qualitative approach utilising an ethnographic research design to capture accounts of what managers do in practice and under what conditions and constraints. Descriptive accounts of dialogues and interactions from interviews and observations were detailed from a reflexive perspective considering the interplay of researcher as observer, the observed and co-constructor. Conversational interviews were conducted to determine how participants self-defined judgement and made sense of using it in everyday organisational life that is often taken-for-granted. Themes and interpretations of using judgement to reach decisions in-the-moment were uncovered. The findings and lessons learnt from the practicalities and ethics of the research process will be a foundation to build on during the PhD programme phase and useful for improving the research design.

This dissertation contributes to the literature on managerial judgement in understudied environments, such as social enterprises, from a social constructionist perspective. In addition, it contributes to our knowledge on organisational sensemaking by exploring judgement more in-depth as a constitutive element of sensemaking in day-to-day managing and as a prompt on 'what to do next'. The managers in this study add to our understanding of how judgement 'in-the-moment' is used in the unpredictable context of international development organisations. With a radical departure in research approach from the dominant body of JDM literature, this study adds to our knowledge of how reflexive and collaborative approaches to studying judgement can bring deeper co-constructed meaning of the phenomenon to both researcher and participants.

Chapter 2: Literature review

In this chapter, the relevant literature is reviewed to develop the theoretical backdrop to which this project has historical connections. First, the broad and evolving use of the term ‘judgement’ as a form of decision-making will be summarised. Second, cross-disciplinary interpretations will be linked to the current debates taking into consideration epistemological and methodological traditions. Finally, the need to create a new space for theorising on judgement as an everyday action interconnected to sensemaking will be discussed. The concepts mentioned will serve as frameworks for data collection, analysis and interpretation in later chapters.

Defining judgement

The dominant body of literature on judgement resides under the larger umbrella of ‘decision making’ and has been situated in the sub-discipline ‘Judgement and Decision Making (JDM)’. The Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM) originated in 1980 and was formally established in 1986 (SJDM, n.d.), with a European sister association, The European Association for Decision Making (EADM), created in 1993 (EADM, n.d.). The definitions and theories in the cross-disciplinary field of JDM have derived from experimental research in cognitive and behavioural psychology and economics (e.g. Tversky and Kahneman, 1974; Simon, 1987) and continue to be active in theory-building today. Although my study does not ground itself in the JDM framework, it is worth mentioning some historical concepts to which any study of judgement will inevitably be anchored.

The equivocal term ‘judgement’ has a wide range of definitions and usages in the academic and practitioner worlds. In academic literature, psychologists have often referred to judgement as a form of reasoning involving the organisation of a sequence of thoughts via deductive and inductive reasoning (Atkinson et al., 1993). In management and business, debates as to how to categorise or classify judgement in managerial contexts began with Chester Barnard, a practitioner and later author in the 1930s, who attempted to define mental processing categories as ‘logical’ and ‘non-logical’ (Simon, 1987; Akinci and Sadler-Smith, 2012). The delineation was based on what could be described in words and given reasons (‘logical’) and what could not (‘non-logical’). Barnard considered judgement to be ‘non-logical’, often unexplainable and involving intuition. Academic and later Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon (1987, p.57) brought ‘intuitive and judgemental processes’ of managerial decisions to the forefront of academic knowledge, moving the attention from ‘rational’ to ‘non-rational’. He also positioned judgement on the same ‘non-logical’ or ‘non-rational’ side as intuition.

In the 1960s, human and social systems guru Sir Geoffrey Vickers (1967) agreed that the word 'judgement' was used broadly and attempted to apply it to executives and administrators while also generalising to all organisational levels. He argued that an essential quality of managers should be the ability to exercise 'good judgement', yet this was an elusive quality. Vickers (1967) used the term 'action judgement' (implying what to do or how to act) that contained the components of 'value judgements' and 'reality judgements'. Vickers' prescriptive contribution was a call to managers to lead by example and take responsibility for developing minds to be capable of practicing better judgment than their own.

Following the pattern of dual-process theories (e.g. previously mentioned logical/non-logical and rational/non-rational), psycho-biologists from a positivist and experiment-based paradigm, such as Roger Sperry, Phillip Vogel, Joseph Bogun and Michael Gazzaniga, later categorised mental processes into right or left-brained specialised functions (Akinci and Sadler-Smith, 2012). This laid another foundation as to how to situate our ability to form judgements. In the management field, Mintzberg (1976) popularised this concept amongst practitioners in the 1970s by suggesting that managers needed to understand which side was better suited for formal planning or informal 'managing'. This cognitive concept influenced organisational and management researchers who eventually saw the need for integrating both sides, or whole-brained approaches, in times when managers were faced with making decisions under minimal information or uncertainty (Agor, 1986). Another dual-process system was the 'conscious' and 'unconscious' (Simon, 1987) (also referred to as 'non-conscious'), in which 'judgement' as a form of decision-making and deliberation was located in the 'conscious' category. Rejection of the split-brain approach and idea of one system dominant over another was supported with more experimental evidence of differences amongst experts' and novices' behaviours on how they used intuitive and judgemental processes (Simon, 1987). When intuition was used, the element of time and rapid responses or decisions moved the application of one's judgement from 'conscious' to 'unconscious' in a situation. Simon (1987) argued that we could acquire intuitive or judgemental (he used the terms interchangeably) abilities with experience. Although he contributed new knowledge to understanding the non-rational side of managerial decision-making, he did not address how to resolve differences in knowing what managers ought to do and what they actually do in practice.

Recent scholars such as Hodgkinson, Langan-Fox and Sadler-Smith (2008) are mindful of distinguishing between intuition and judgement, but they still embrace the term 'intuitive judgement'. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) used this term in their seminal studies on heuristics, or "simplifying strategies or rules of thumb" (Bazerman and Moore, 2009, p.6) and biases under

uncertainty. This illustrates that judgement may entail intuition and be interconnected. This may also be a sign of a move away from ‘dual-process’ theories towards viewing the phenomenon relationally. However, the complexity of the topic is apparent and the debate continues on what it is and where to locate it. For example, Miller and Ireland (2005, p.21) argue intuition is separate from judgement and that “judgement or choice that feels right” is the product, also referred to as a “gut feeling”. Dane and Pratt (2007) are often credited for their exemplary work in delineating intuition from other approaches, such as guessing and insight. The popularity of studies on intuition related to judgement in managerial decision making is present today. Although ‘naturalist’ research (Lee, 1999; Miles and Huberman, 1994) still has room for development, qualitative approaches using interview methods are being employed, such as focussing on intuition in the finance sector (Hensman and Sadler-Smith, 2011), exploring the affect side of financial decision-making and the role of emotions amongst investment bankers and traders (Fenton-O’Creevy et al., 2011).

A more recent theory that has spurred debate amongst JDM scholars is Dijksterhuis and Nordgren’s (2006) unconscious-thought theory (UTT). Their experiments claimed that unconscious deliberations produced better judgements than conscious deliberations in complex decision-making situations. A supporter of UTT, Bargh (2011), criticises JDM scholars for seeing one kind of thought process as superior to the other, arguing for the convergence of both unconscious and conscious processes. He suggests an innate quality to our abilities to use judgement and pursue goals, or ‘automaticity’ in our behaviour or actions. Bargh appears to take a ‘nativist’ view, similar to Kant (Hanna, 2009, 1.1; Atkinson et al., 1993, p.191), that judgement is an innate cognitive capacity. This is in contrast to Simon’s (1987, p.63) argument that judgement can be learned and improved since it is “simply analyses frozen into habit and into the capacity for rapid response through recognition”. In handling stressful situations and responding to problems, Simon saw the effective manager as utilising intuition and judgement to look backward at the situation and look forward to finding a course of action; and this would improve with expertise. (His reference to both crisis situations and the concept of time and experience has links to the literature on sensemaking, which will be later explored.) However, these theories were developed within a quantitative paradigm, mainly using experiments, viewing reality as ‘out there’ and creating a distance between the researcher and the phenomenon studied to attempt to control biases. Although claims to objectively measure judgement are made, there is a lack of studies from a qualitative paradigm conducted in natural settings and ‘closer’ to the phenomenon and informants. My study addresses this gap in academic knowledge on how judgements are socially constructed and understood, within the constraints of organisational domains.

Related concepts in metaphysics

In metaphysics and philosophy of mind, the topic of judgement has also been visited with more of a reflection on the word and phenomenon itself. Christopher Peacocke (2010) claims that we often know when we are making a judgement, decision or attempt to solve a problem in which we are involved at the moment. He questions “how do we know these things?” (Peacocke, 2010, p.2). He claims judgements are in a category of knowledge that is a step beyond a ‘mental event’ and considers them as ‘mental actions’ since they are intentional or involve trying (Peacocke, 2007, p.7). His reference to the mental act of judgement has parallels to Kant who also saw it as an action of synthesising objective and subjective connections (Rohlf, 2010). In addition, Peacocke’s argument supports the JDM literature, particularly Kahneman’s Nobel prize-winning contribution to judgement under uncertainty. Kahneman redefined Stanovich and West’s (2000) theory of another ‘dual-process’ thinking framework called System 1 and System 2. System 1 is the fast, automatic and intuitive mode; System 2 is the slower, rule-based and controlled mode of processing information (Evans, 2008). Kahneman and Peacock see judgement on the System 2 side as an intentional action. However, if the basis of judgement is considered intuitive, as interpreted by some management scholars as ‘intuitive judgement’ (e.g. Hensman and Sadler-Smith, 2011; Hodgkinson et al., 2008; Simon, 1987), this favours the System 1 side. Arguments for theories of dual or integrated systems to locate judgement and labels to describe it have been scrutinised and, as one can see, interpretations contradict one another both within and across disciplines. Therefore, locating judgement as ‘either in one or the other’ in generic dual-system models can be problematic.

Perhaps a more subtle approach to finding a common ground or pragmatic way of considering judgement is Owens’s (2010, p.121) focus on the ‘practical’ nature of judgement or “a judgement about what to do”. He contributes to the metaphysical literature by putting boundaries around the phenomenon and separating it from beliefs. In this case, beliefs may supplement or inform our judgements. However, he argues that we cannot control our beliefs but we “can control both judgement and intention by reflecting on the constraints on the process of practical deliberation” (Owens, 2010, p.137). The constraints we assess are “time, energy, and cognitive resource[s] (e.g. memory)” (Owens, 2010, p.135). Owens claims we can make a judgement about whether to even make a judgement in the first place, illustrating our ability to control as we might control our intentions or actions. He also points out two cases we may consider in deliberations: “those in which we don’t take ourselves to know what we ought to do and those in which we do” (Owens, 2010, p.135 emphasis added). Although he brings constraints into consideration as Simon did, these factors remain in the individual or internal realm and the external domain or environment remains an underexplored area in understanding how judgement unfolds.

Linkages to workplace organising and sensemaking

Similar to Owens's 'practical' emphasis from metaphysics, Beckett (1996, p.138) emphasises 'professionals' judgement' (broadly using the term 'professional') in which they are charged to make practical judgements in ordinary work life that "this is the 'right' thing to do". He phrases these critical moments as "hot action" because "all of us make judgments whilst feeling the heat" (Beckett, 1996, p.139). Applying Beckett's theory, Keevers and Treleaven (2011) conducted a 'practice-based' study on how counsellors know 'what to do next' during counselling sessions with clients. They take a relational and naturalistic approach to investigating organising practices and how counsellors determine "what to do in the heat of the moment" (Beckett, 1996, p.135) and know how to proceed. This 'know-how' has been referred to as 'tacit knowledge', credited to Polanyi (1958, as cited in Beckett, 1996) and linked to intuition in the JDM literature. However, Beckett and Hager (2000) argue that beyond the implied 'knowing' there is a practical wisdom gained (referring to Aristotle's *phronesis* [p.301]) that is learned in the workplace through having to make judgements and decisions.

The sensemaking literature has links to the psychology discipline's usage of the term judgement in which it refers to reasoning through means of organising cognitive processes. "A central theme in both organizing and sensemaking is that people organize to make sense of equivocal inputs and enact this sense back into the world to make that world more orderly" (Weick et al., 2005, p.410). Since Weick's background is in psychology, it is unsurprising that he took the angle of 'organising'. Concerning management and organisational research, he argues that rational decision making models do not apply in that "managers with limited attention face many issues at the same time, often evaluating several situations, interpretations, choices and actions simultaneously" (Weick et al., 2005, p.415). Particularly relevant to my study is Weick's (1988, 2001) notable theory that we continuously act and interpret situations considering past or future consequences.

Weick's theory of sensemaking involves action that asks two questions: "What is going on here?" and "what do I do next?" (Weick et al., 2005, p.415). In his example of medical sensemaking, he uses the term 'hunch' (Weick et al, 2005, p.412), and other sensemaking scholars have used 'intuitively sense' (Cunliffe and Coupland, 2011, p.81), both referring to the intuition side of the JDM literature (Dane and Pratt, 2007; Miller and Ireland, 2005). This draws linkages to the concept of judgement suggesting it may be a constitutive element of sensemaking. Weick emphasises that interpretation or understanding (or attempts to understand) is the central phenomenon in sensemaking, suggesting an overarching focus on the search for meaning. Although this is distinct from the concept of judgement in which choice is often a

focal point, what these concepts share in common is the agent's direction towards some mode of action.

Additional theories have emerged from social constructionist views of sensemaking postulating that it has a 'living' embodied nature that consumes more than emotions and involves all of the senses (Cunliffe, 2002; Cunliffe and Coupland, 2011). Cunliffe and Coupland (2011) suggest that making organisational life sensible happens through mundane, everyday narrative performances, not only in formal decision-making situations. They argue there is a fragmented, spontaneous and polyphonic nature of narrative performances amongst organisational members. This concept is informed by Bakhtin's theory that 'multiple voices' (our inner voice, the voice of 'others', about and to whom we are conversing) inform our 'subconscious knowledge' before we respond in situations (Holquist, 2002; Maybin, 2001; Shotter, 1993). These embodied and polyphonic themes have relevancy to the organisational context of this study in which multiple stakeholder groups may have competing voices as managers determine 'what to do next' in day-to-day operations. Interestingly, what Shotter (1993) called 'knowing from within' or 'knowing of the third kind' has similarities to Reber's (1989) theories of 'implicit learning' and 'tacit knowledge' in the JDM literature. However, few empirical studies have been conducted in natural work settings to uncover what is actually happening in practice or linked to existing cross-disciplinary theories of our understanding of using judgement in-the-moment, for example, deciding whether to develop a stakeholder partnership or who to trust when hiring a new employee.

For field studies on sensemaking in organisations, there is minimal literature focussed on the context of managing organisations in developing countries or social enterprises (the generic category under which international development organisations reside). The ambiguities, risks and uncertainty associated with managerial decisions in this type of environment require using judgement on an on-going basis. One study that has made an explicit link between judgement and sensemaking is through a case study method on the managerial sensemaking of the Ethiopian business environment through a leadership development and learning perspective (Woldesenbet and Storey, 2010). However, the context remains in the confines of profit-generating companies and external business factors affecting formal high-level decisions. The gap in the literature is amongst studies on managers using judgement 'in-the-moment' in routine organisational life. This taken-for-granted nature of 'managing' is often unnoticed and ignored.

An example of an in-depth look at the everyday routines inside organisations working in teams is Patriotta's (2003) sensemaking study on organisational knowledge creation through narratives. His research in a Fiat factory is an example of an alternative perspective on

investigating sensemaking and narratives. He takes a phenomenological and naturalistic approach, with detailed observations of participants in everyday work routines coupled with interviews. The relevance to my project is in the aim to explore the mundane, taken for granted activities in organisational life. The narrative aspect of sensemaking is similar to how judgements embedded in organisational life may first be detected and then further explored for understanding by managers.

Summary

The philosophical and metaphysical contribution to understanding the concept of judgement has been in the form of abstract theories since Aristotle and Kant and is to be acknowledged. Since then, debates in psychology and its sub-disciplines have filled the empirical gap concerning the overarching topic of JDM, acquired through a positivist lens and deductive approaches such as experiments, quasi-experiments (e.g. Dijksterhuis and Nordgren, 2006; Simon, 1987; Tversky and Kahneman, 1974) and cross-sectional surveys focussing predominately on intuition (e.g. Agor, 1986; Burke and Miller, 1999). Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) suggest that qualitative investigations bring “local groundedness”, “richness and holism” over a “sustained period” and consider “causalities” (how and why the phenomenon happens). In management and organisational research, more social constructionist perspectives and inductive approaches have entered the debate using qualitative methods. However, these studies continue to study judgement in Western economies, profit-maximising institutions and in more formal instances, such as board meetings, strategic planning or financial investment decisions. The mundane, everyday nature of using judgement in-the-moment in organisational life is an area that has been under-investigated. This study aims to narrow this gap in the literature to further our knowledge on how judgement is embedded in organising from an in-depth, descriptive perspective. This study situates itself inside social enterprises connected to developing economies adding new managerial perspectives that are “lived experiences” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.10) to the knowledge on judgement in-the-moment. Next, the research methodology and methods used will be described.

Chapter 3: Methods of data collection

Methodology

In order to investigate the phenomenon in the everyday context of participants’ routines, constraints and handling of uncertain situations, an ethnographic methodology was employed. As the principal “key fieldwork tool” (Van Maanen, Manning and Miller, 1989 cited in

Reinharz, 1997, p.3) and co-creator, I conducted unstructured interviews and observations in participants' natural work settings across a two-month period. Van Maanen (1979, p.103) refers to ethnographic studies as a way "to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation". This approach inside international development organisations aimed to attain a holistic picture to better understand what managers do in practice and under what conditions and constraints. With this lens, I observed naturally occurring talk from members, how they actually 'do' routine activities and manage social situations. Referring to observations afterwards during conversational interviews with participants allowed for reflection and co-construction on their meaning making of their own judgement in day-to-day work life.

A further rationale for the approach to this study is the reflexive nature of an ethnographic approach. As a researcher, I became a part of the social world and did not isolate myself from the social phenomenon I studied, nor could I avoid having an effect on it (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Although all social research approaches involve an element of reflexivity, my role in this investigation on managerial judgement in-the-moment was one in which I also became the subject studied. Ellis, Kiesinger and Tillmann-Healy (1997, p.121) advocate interactive interviewing methods and state "the distinction between 'researcher' and 'subject' gets blurred". I reflected upon my own sensemaking of using judgement and interpreted and voiced this alongside my participants in this study. When, for example, ethnographers and participants are "authorial voices in generating knowledge", this active co-construction has been referred to as "radically reflexive" (Cunliffe, 2003, p.996). Ellis et al. (1997, p.123) argue researcher involvement in a candid manner "helps respondents feel more comfortable sharing information and closes the hierarchical gap between researchers and respondents". Although my role as a researcher could not be ignored, I attempted to narrow this gap and identify with them by reminding them we were learning together, rather than portray myself as the expert with the 'right' answers (Hosking, 2011). In this sense, a 'relational perspective' on the social construction of meaning was also taken, stressing the importance of myself as an observer being in direct engagement with participants' worlds (Keevers and Treleaven, 2011). In this way, methodologically, doing research with others could create opportunities for open dialogue (Hosking, 2011). For example, Keevers and Treleaven (2011) take a relational approach to investigating how counsellors decide 'what to do next' in the midst of client sessions. A similar empirical approach to understanding embodied judgements made 'in the heat of the moment' (Beckett, 1996, p.135) was applied to my study. This research design enabled the research question to be addressed in terms of how managers understood their judgement-making in practice.

Sampling

Determining a sample strategy and negotiating access inside organisations for this study was a critical part of the research design and planning stage. Due to the fixed dates of the dissertation, I began this stage as soon as possible, starting at the end of February through the beginning of March 2012. I aimed to recruit a purposive sample of two UK-based international development organisations, with two to three participants from each organisation, in case one organisation later withdrew from the study. The type of organisation was based on my personal interest and professional background as a former practitioner in social enterprises, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and voluntary organisations. The decision for recruiting participants in the UK was to minimise costs and travel time. Another rationale was to lay the groundwork for future possibilities to return to the sites later in the PhD phase, or to later use a 'snowball' sample and ask participants for referrals to other organisations in their network (Blaxter et al., 2010). Last, the decision was based on my presumption that the response rate would be greater with the strong national awareness of The Open University and my previous work experience in the same field as the investigation. Therefore, a 'convenience' sample and an opportunistic sampling approach were used for this study.

My opportunistic strategy was followed by positive responses from the organisations I approached. I identified a network of social enterprises with international development foci from the Welsh Government's 'Wales for Africa' initiative and emailed three introduction letters to the most senior leaders in the organisations inviting them to participate in my research (see appendix A). Within one week, two positive replies were received from Welsh-based organisations with partner (beneficiary) organisations in Sub-Saharan African countries: one from a charity comprised of non-paid trustees and the other from a small business with associates led by a social entrepreneur (hereafter referred to as 'Charity' and 'Social Enterprise', respectively). They both managed various economic, educational, social and/or environmental development projects ranging from training teachers and building and operating a school in Zambia to designing a climate change strategy in Lesotho.

Included in this stage of fieldwork preparation, was the essential task of considering the ethics and practicalities of doing social research and writing a sound application to The Open University's Ethics Committee, including a project summary for participants and consent agreement (see appendix B). In November 2011, I attended a seminar led by the Chair of the Ethics Committee to better understand the ethics of research. Ethical issues were also discussed in depth during the MRes Management and Business Research Module. Recruiting participants, negotiating access with the organisations' 'gatekeepers' and applying to the Ethics Committee for approval were performed concurrently to make efficient use of the short time available for

the project. Because the duration of the review process can vary, this can delay the start of fieldwork if the steps to obtain approval are not carefully considered beforehand in the research design and planning process. (See appendix C; the actual date I submitted my application, 12 March 2012, was five weeks before the Ethics Committee approved it.)

Methods and rationale

The types of data collected were observations of the most senior leaders of the organisations (the ‘gatekeepers’ and key informants) and unstructured interviews with them and additional members individually. Observations took place in line with participants’ normal ways of conducting work, such as remotely from my home office on conference calls during Social Enterprise’s regular team meetings, or at Charity’s fundraising events held in various towns in North Wales. Czarniawska (2008, p.7) calls for alternative ways of studying the modern organisation’s “people on the move, simultaneous multi-site organizing and virtual management”. This is relevant to my study due to the nature of international development organisations; managers must lead teams with members spread across different countries (and time zones) and daily work activities occur in multiple locations. The small-sized organisations in my study operated on lean budgets. Some travel was necessary to meet various stakeholders, such as donors, sponsors, clients or beneficiaries, but use of mobile or Internet technology for communication often replaced face-to-face meetings. Observations took two different forms since the organisations had inherently different ways of operating. These forms also helped to draw boundaries for the cases.

In order to ‘case’ the study, key informants and I agreed upon my two-month involvement in their current programmes. For Charity, I accompanied, or ‘shadowed’ (Czarniawska, 2008), my key informant, Cedric, through a series of fundraising meetings with the local clubs of an international women’s voluntary service organisation. This important donor group selected Charity as the North Wales regional ‘Charity of the Year’ and the member-only meetings were to build awareness and encourage fundraising in local chapters. My role as a researcher was overt and I was there to assist Cedric with setting-up presentations, but not to take part in them. I was an invited guest with Charity and could converse with members of the women’s organisation. For Social Enterprise, my key informant, Andrew, and I agreed that I would observe, not participate in discussions, their regular team conference calls held over Skype for a specific programme that the company led for the Welsh government. Further details on each organisation will be explained in the ‘data collection’ section of the following chapter. Data was recorded in the form of descriptive fieldnotes of participants’ activities, the environment in which they worked and reflexive memos of my insights throughout the research process. The

aim was to observe key informants in their natural settings managing their daily work routines and the contexts of judgement-making processes in-the-moment.

Sensing key informants' judgements during the social interplay of work activities required my own judgement (Emerson et al., 1995). The specific accounts and activities were referred to later during interviews to probe more deeply about judgement-making processes and to learn how they made sense of these episodes. It was important to understand the background literature on JDM, as previously mentioned, as to how potential biases may influence my own judgement as a researcher whilst using naturalistic approaches in situ. Sadler (1981, p.127) cautions the limitations of one's ability to process large amounts of data, particularly in qualitative methods, due to "our intuitive ignorance of natural variability and our tendency to seek meaning in or impose meaning upon the world around us". Judgements involved in data collection and analysis will be discussed in the following chapter and acknowledgement of my own biases will be examined in the final chapter.

The second form of data collected was unstructured, 'conversational' interviews (Lee, 1999; Silverman, 2006). Individual open-ended interviews were conducted face-to-face or via telephone as soon as possible after observations to keep accounts fresh in participants' memories. I recorded interviews using a digital audio-recorder and/or handwritten notes, in case equipment failed or impromptu discussions transpired (Creswell, 1994). I asked participants to generate their own interpretations of what they considered to be judgements and how they made sense in forming them in-the-moment in their daily work. General examples of judgements were given as well as specific ones from my recent observations. Using a formal interview structure would have been inconsistent to a relational approach to data collection and conveying a conversational, exploratory style of discussion. My personality and role as a researcher were also important factors to consider in maintaining this approach, such as past experiences that have shaped my 'coaching' interview style (Hertz, 1997). For these reasons, an ethnographic and relational approach in the field was befitting to build relationships with participants.

Alternative methods consistent with the methodology and social constructionist epistemology, such as private documents in the form of meeting minutes, emails and personal diaries, were not used for data collection. Although helpful in transcribing and obtaining private information, participants may be reluctant to share such documents (Creswell, 2003). For example, participants may consider personal diaries time consuming or may write in a biased way to manage positive impressions or to look good in front of the researcher. I may have risked taking the content out of context or over-representing views from more skilfully literate people (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Also, documents may not have the same 'living' qualities of

the type of judgement ‘in-the-moment’ being investigated. For example, it could have been difficult to analyse how they were written or how editing was completed beforehand using judgement ‘in-the-making’. Interviewing participants allowed me to refer to recent situations and actions I observed. Although this was retrospective, participants had opportunities to reflect on their recent activities, the context of the situation and (attempt to) articulate their overall understanding of their judgement in-the-moment. Coupling observations and interviews as informal conversations was useful to gain perspectives on a phenomenon that is often taken for granted and unexpressed. Details on the how the data was collected and analysed will be discussed next.

Chapter 4: Collecting and analysing the data

The data corpus comprises fieldnotes and transcripts from observations and interviews, background information from the organisations’ websites and reflective memos. The data set from the corpus used for analysis was fieldnotes, interview transcripts and reflective memos. My self-awareness of the underlying issues of reflexivity and how my presence may have influenced how participants ‘acted’ was an integral part of the data collection and analysis phase. Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) noted that participants’ actions “occur in specific situations within a social and historical context”, and may involve “impression management” of how they want others to perceive them, which can affect researchers’ analysis and interpretation. The data collection procedures will be described first, followed by the data analysis using an inductive strategy.

Data collection

Because the two international development organisations were inherently different, I needed to adapt my fieldwork to the ways they operated. Both organisations did not have physical office buildings to where members travelled on a regular basis. Social Enterprise was a registered company started by a social entrepreneur, Andrew, and identified itself as a leadership development consultancy. He was the single shareholder and paid associates were not considered employees. Charity was a registered charity that built and operated a school in a rural, disadvantaged Zambian village for grades 7, 8 and 9 and adult literacy classes. All leadership team members, six trustees in Wales and one coordinator in Zambia, were non-paid and relied mainly on grants, donations and volunteers. A table outlining the profiles of the two participating organisations can be found in appendix D. The process of collecting data will be explained, including my fieldwork adaptation with each organisation to minimise disrupting the ‘natural way work was done’ for them.

Social Enterprise was a 'virtual organisation' and members communicated regularly with one another via email, mobile phone and Skype (Internet telephony); they rarely met face-to-face due to the locations of three members in Wales and four members in three countries in Africa. One of their main contracts was with the Welsh Government to manage a leadership development programme that aimed to develop *assignees*' (members' term for employee volunteers sent on assignments) leadership capabilities whilst working with an NGO or government department in a developing country for eight weeks. Social Enterprise acted as an intermediary between Welsh government departments and 'partner organisations' (beneficiaries) in Cameroon, Lesotho, Uganda and Zambia. They arranged the logistics, operations and training for Welsh public sector leaders and worked with partner organisations to develop relevant assignments. I observed four regularly scheduled team meetings that were held as conference calls via Skype. Six to seven people were on the call each time. The purpose of the meetings was to review the new group of volunteers and assignments and match them accordingly. Initially, The Open University Ethics Committee recommended posting signs in physical locations where observations were being conducted. I adapted that to the virtual environment by emailing the team and informing them of the purpose of my research and my presence on the calls as a non-participating observer. This was reviewed at the beginning of the conference calls and permission was obtained for audio-recording. Fieldnotes from observations were taken to better understand the sociocultural context of the organisation and current issues. Specific observations of behaviours and interactions were focussed on key informants (the most senior leaders of the organisations) in line with one of the aims of the research, to methodologically explore ways to naturalistically research judgement 'in-the-moment' by conducting interviews with them shortly after each observation day.

In Charity, I observed my key informant, Cedric, on three pre-arranged observation days at meetings with donors (a women's community service organisation) in Abegele, Caernarfon and Llangefni, Wales. This differed from observations in Social Enterprise's virtual environment in which I accompanied Cedric to and from the meetings and travelled together in the same vehicle. The purposes of the meetings were to build awareness of Charity's mission and accomplishments and to fuel more fundraising activities for them with the local chapters. This was a part of the income-generating process and a crucial activity for Charity since donors were a main source of funding to continue operating the school, build future facilities and enrol more students. Specifically, funds were used for Zambian teachers' salaries, teacher training, building mud huts for accommodation, maintaining maize and banana crops on the grounds, school supplies, equipment and building new classrooms for the growing demand. Work was conducted through mobile phone and email correspondences with one team member located in

Zambia. Occasional trustee meetings were face-to-face in Wales, but most of the administrative work occurred in members' home offices. I was once invited to observe a trustee meeting, given two days notice, but was not available to attend. Therefore, my observations through shadowing were limited to the scheduled fundraising activities.

To supplement observations of key informants, 45 to 60-minute unstructured interviews with an additional member from each organisation were conducted to gather further perspectives on judgement. Access to speak with them was negotiated with key informants after initial observations when the organisations were more familiar with my involvement and role as a student researcher. First, I took gender balance into account since both key informants were men. I purposefully selected the additional Social Enterprise team member, Betrys, to interview because she was responsible for the operational areas of the business and assignees' safety and security. She had more knowledge of the countries and their conditions where volunteer assignments were than Andrew. With Charity, I selected Delwyn to interview because she was the only other full-time trustee besides Cedric managing the organisation. Last, voice was also taken into consideration during the selection of additional interviewees. I noticed the two selected members tended to be quieter when other members were present (for example during my observations of Social Enterprise's team calls). This was an opportunity to capture the views of members that had softer voices. A table summarising all participants is in appendix E.

Because I had previously worked in the same field as the participants, disclosing my background and interests at the beginning of interviews had advantages in reaching 'common ground' and establishing rapport quickly. To reinforce a non-threatening presence, I explained to participants that they were not being evaluated during our conversations nor did they need to justify their statements. Emphasising that our discussion was about how they made sense of using their judgement, and they were not being judged or critiqued, was imperative for establishing an open and honest environment from the start in order to gain their detailed insights on something that may have been difficult to describe in words. I prepared 'guiding' questions to help steer our interactive discussions. For example, 'How would you define judgement, as a form of decision-making in the moment, in your role?' 'How do you make sense of what it is?' I asked for their perceptions on the origins of judgement and also probed on specific aspects of their roles they mentioned and how they may or may not involve judgement. With key informants, I pointed out particular instances during my observations and invited them to share their thoughts on using judgement in those moments and how they determined 'what to do' next.

I stayed consistent with key informants' preferred modes of participation throughout the fieldwork stage. I conducted final debrief conversations with key informants over Skype with Social Enterprise and in-person with Charity. The purpose was to update them on the progress of my project, to manage expectations that I would be discontinuing my previous frequent activity with them and to bring closure to my fieldwork stage. As part of the initial agreements made during access negotiations, I offered compensation in the form of voluntary work for the time they participated in my research. Andrew requested a brief written report on the previous studies conducted on international volunteering in the corporate sector. Cedric asked for a summary of my research project for Charity's newsletter. At the end of my time in the field, I submitted and reviewed these outputs in the final debrief meetings. I asked to maintain in contact with key informants for future projects and they agreed. I also reminded them of my commitment to submit final project reports to them by October.

Leaving the field was accompanied by mixed feelings of both melancholy from detaching myself from the organisations with which I became involved and relief from constantly bouncing between their social worlds. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.94) note that "researchers do not always leave the field physically and emotionally unscathed, and they rarely leave unaffected by the experience of research". I found this to be true as I realised key informants and I developed good relationships and we continued to maintain in contact after my fieldwork was finished and I turned to more data analysis and writing.

Data analysis

Using Miles and Huberman's (1994, p.10) definition of 'analysis', three streams of activities were conducted concurrently: "data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification". The first two activities will be described in this section and the final one will be described in the following chapter. First, the 'data reduction' part of analysis involved writing summaries and reflective memos, determining which portions of the data to 'code' or label, and from which narratives, and searching for any patterns and themes that appeared with regards to the research question. I used a six-phase thematic analysis technique as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87): "familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report".

In the first phase, to familiarise myself with the data, I manually transcribed any audio-recorded interviews and observations no more than one week afterwards to be able to better recall the conversations and noted any additional reflections on my own feelings of the experiences.

Rather than outsourcing the transcription, I chose to do this by hand to become more acquainted with my data, as Braun and Clarke (2006) recommended. I numbered each line in the transcriptions and made note of emphasised and repeated words and phrases, non-verbal utterances and duration of pauses. I re-checked transcriptions for accuracy and participants' anonymity as I organised my data and re-named files with conventions that were easier to identify and retrieve. I began reviewing data items, one case (organisation) at a time, to get a general 'sense of the whole' and wrote reflective memos throughout the course of analysis (Creswell, 2003).

Second, I used an inductive coding technique to generate a list of initial codes. I manually reviewed fieldnotes and transcripts line-by-line and created short labels or tags to particular words, phrases or paragraphs that were significant to members or me (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For example, if certain phrases were used across a number of participants or one participant repeated or emphasised specific words, or if contradictory responses seemed striking to me. I used *in vivo* labels as much as possible to retain verbatim member-used terms (Creswell, 2003). Miles and Huberman (1994, p.56) suggested that "coding is analysis" and to be mindful of the purposes of one's study and conceptual lenses, whilst also being open to things that one may not have expected to find. These labels were then assigned shortened codes and this preliminary list was entered in a table format using Excel® worksheets; each code included the corresponding data item numbers, line numbers, transcript extracts and memos/notes. This helped me to retrieve the original locations of extracts or return to surrounding data if needed later. I decided to use tables in Excel® due to the efficiency and ease of retaining and comparing multiple versions side-by-side, and for editing and sorting data later in the next phases.

In the third step, after coding the data set, I reviewed the preliminary list of codes and grouped them into categories that I perceived as potential emergent themes. I designated a different colour to each category to be able to visually distinguish them during analysis. These "first-order concepts" (Van Maanen, 1979, p.103) were participants' descriptive, and even prescriptive, perceptions of the phenomenon. Some examples included participants' descriptions of what judgement meant to them and what influenced it, how judgement was applied in situations in their organisations and how they thought people could improve their judgement. If needed, I returned to each data item and re-coded any previously labelled chunks of text according to the new clusters (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Although I had an eye on the literature, I aimed to uncover recurrent themes found in the data from each case. Using graphics software, I created a thematic map, or mind-map, for each case to visually represent how codes fit into predominant categories and may have had hierarchies

and relationships between them (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Spradley, 1980 cited in Creswell, 1994). My preference to map the themes was due to the efficiency of refining and saving versions as part of my ‘data display’ and later assisting with ‘conclusion drawing’, the remaining analytical activities suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994).

Fourth, I reviewed all the clusters of overarching themes developed for each case, assigned my inductive “second-order concepts” (Van Maanen, 1979, p.104), and then reviewed across cases as an entire data set to refine themes for clarity and determine ‘fit’ as a whole. I returned to the sorted tables of coded extracts, decided if there was enough data to support each theme and revised my thematic maps accordingly (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Appendix F illustrates the final cross-case thematic map developed as a visual representation to assist during conclusion drawing. Particular attention was paid to the ‘miscellaneous’ codes to see if potential new themes emerged or if any re-categorising was necessary. For example, ‘decisiveness’ was a code and initial first-order category that I decided to dissolve after I reviewed the evidence to support it relative to other categories. In comparison to other categories, the supporting data did not hold as strongly. This phase was arduous since any editing process can be perpetual unless boundaries are drawn, such as the one I just described. My theoretical “interpretations of interpretations” (Van Maanen, 1979, p.104) became the second-order themes that I next defined and refined as four main themes:

1. Diverse interpretations of judgement
2. Judgement is a socially constructed process
3. Judgement is enacted in uncertain situations
4. Time and space influence judgements

This fifth phase of defining and naming themes was also challenging and repeated at least five times. For instance, iterations of refinements to theme names involved using nouns, adjectives, and continuous verbs or a combination of them. I decided that using phrases would describe the conceptual unit and scope of each theme in the clearest way. Re-analysing the first-order data and the literature also informed my decisions in naming the final themes. Since this was my first time analysing data, I sought the advice of my three supervisors and undertook an additional module (Module B2, Advanced Qualitative Methods, led by Professor Martyn Hammersley). Also, although a qualitative data analysis software package was not used for this project, I completed a two-day training course on ‘NVivo’ with an experienced qualitative researcher. The general data analysis strategies learnt were applicable and helped with managing and interrogating my data. Appendix G presents the framework of how second-order concepts were derived from first-order categories. (Gioia, Price, Hamilton and Thomas’s [2010] study informed this structure of data display.) Making sense of the analysis and producing the overall

‘story’ of the data in line with my research question, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) final phase of thematic analysis, will be discussed next.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion

This chapter will discuss my interpretations of my findings in relation to the literature. The four emergent themes describe how participants made sense of judgement as to what it is and when and how judgements are made as leaders of international development organisations. Appendix H displays the structure of emergent second-order themes with supporting extracts from first-order data (excerpts from transcripts and fieldnotes). As Van Maanen (1979, 1988) suggested, second-order concepts are a researcher’s theories or ‘interpretations of others’ interpretations’. These themes are not intended to illustrate a step-by-step process of how people construct judgements; they are my interpretations, from an ethnographic approach, of participants’ interpretations. Although my ethnographic approach attempts to ‘get closer’ to the social reality of judgement in international development organisations, I acknowledge that the data I collected of participants’ understandings are finally filtered through my interpretations of my experiences in the field with them (Module A, MRes; Hertz, 1997). Each of the four themes that emerged will now be reviewed.

Theme 1: Diverse interpretations of judgement

The first theme surfaced from noticing participants’ varied definitions and descriptions of judgement rather than patterns of similarity. There was a range of interpretations within the same organisation and across organisations. Blumer (1969 cited in Hammersley, 1992, p.67) advocated, “Even people in geographical proximity to one another may live in different ‘social worlds’”. For example, Social Enterprise Manager Andrew used the term ‘gut’ (“gut sense”, “gut instinct” and “gut feel”) when describing how he used his judgement to match volunteers to assignments to determine if a “good match” was made. This follows Miller and Ireland’s (2005, p.21) argument that “judgement or choice that feels right” is the *product*, referring to it as a “gut feeling”. Andrew also commented on using “patterns of information perhaps steered by past experience”. As Simon (1987, p.63) argued, judgement could be learned and improved upon since it was “simply analyses frozen into habit and into the capacity for rapid response through recognition”. Andrew also perceived judgement as an ability that could be enhanced by all people and this was the core to his work designing and implementing international volunteer assignments as leadership development programmes for organisations. The implications were that he ‘changed people’ by providing them with enlightened experiences that would later guide *their* judgement and this was part of his way of creating positive social change. His

understanding of judgement supports Simon's (1987) theory of acquiring judgemental abilities with experience, as well as Vickers's (1967) argument that practicing managers need to develop the ability to exercise 'good judgement'.

Contrastingly, Charity Trustee Delwyn considered judgement to be one's personal opinion that entailed a "fine balancing act at times". The decision formed was from "different threads of things from your experience; [...] snippets of things that you've learnt along the road. It doesn't come out of any book. It doesn't come out of any lecture." To her, these opinions were also related to ethics, morals and values that began forming "from the day you were born". This explicitly links to Bargh's (2011) claim that the ability to use judgement is innate. She told me about a conversation she had with her daughter, "You give the foundation to your children. It's up to them what they build on that foundation. You can't influence them. At least they've had the foundation. They know the difference between right and wrong. And she [daughter] still comes along and says 'what do you think of this' and I'll say whatever. I give her my opinion and then it's hers." Although the area of ethical judgement was not the focus of this study, I was not surprised to find references to ethics in both organisations with social responsibilities ties to their mission statements. This suggests relevance to Owens's (2010) claim of deliberations on what we *ought* to do and what we *do*, as well as Beckett's (1996, p.138) work on 'professionals' judgements' in everyday work life that require immediate decisions or "hot action" to act on the "right' thing to do". Both key informants, in the most senior positions in their organisations, used the term 'duty' referring to being "duty bound", such as Cedric needing to report on "what we've done with the money". Andrew stated, a "duty to support partners we're already working with more [than forming new partnerships]". Both suggest moral obligations to their stakeholders were involved in their judgements.

Another interpretation suggested judgement to be an action with the freedom to decide to act or not. On one hand, social entrepreneur Andrew spoke from a broader perspective about his "freedom to decide" his company's direction as the single shareholder. On the other, Trustee Cedric spoke from a narrower perspective about his choice of action in a specific moment during one of the fundraising meetings I observed. He admitted to me what he would like to say in response to a question from the audience, and could have, but decided not to. Weick (2001, p.27) noted that "action leads the sensemaking process; it does not follow it". This concept may suggest that judgement is a constitutive part of sensemaking, such as determining whether or not to act. Weick emphasises that understanding (or attempts to understand) is significant to sensemaking. However, having choices to act upon may be the focal point in using judgement, such as during moments we ask ourselves "what do I do next?" (Weick et al., 2005, p.415) before understanding any meanings attached to them. These concepts share in common the

agent's direction towards action, particularly as managers are faced with simultaneous tasks of assessing and interpreting alternatives (Weick et al., 2005).

The freedom to decide to act or not has linkages to another participant's reference to judgement as having choices that are "self-authorised". This first-order, *in vivo* term describes using judgement as an individually controlled capability. Operations Manager Betrys told me stories about volunteers that she considered to be capable of shifting thoughts into actions to have an enjoyable experience and add value to partner organisations during their assignments. Her examples of 'self-authorised' judgement were how volunteers decided to 'stand up' and make the most of their experiences or to 'sit' and complain and see mostly the problems in their assignments. Again, this suggests that judgement is constitutive of sensemaking and how some volunteers give themselves permission to move from "what is going on here?" to "what do I do next?" (Weick et al., 2005, p.415) and some do not.

These 'miscellaneous' sub-categories in my analysis may not have fit in with the other predominant emergent themes. However, they carry significance on their own and reflect the diversity of interpretations of judgement. They also reflect similar debates in the literature about whether or not judgement is innate (e.g. Kant [Hanna, 2009; Atkinson et al., 1993] and Bargh [2011]) or can be learned (e.g. Beckett and Hager's [2000] reference to Aristotle's concept of gaining 'practical wisdom' and Simon [1987]), or where to locate judgement, as a rapid, intuitive and instinctual process or a slow, deliberative one (as Tversky and Kahneman [1974], Simon [1987] and Hodgkinson et al. [2008] often used the terms 'intuitive' or 'judgemental' interchangeably).

Theme 2: Judgement is a socially constructed process

The second theme pertains to judgement during social interactions amongst internal members and also with external stakeholders to build relationships. This finding of judgement as a socially constructed process or negotiated activity has not been a prominent concept in previous studies in the literature. Participants from both organisations affirmed that judgement involved talking, listening to and trusting their colleagues before coming to collective decisions. They explained that part of their judgement processes involved trusting their team members' judgements whilst collaborating. This often occurred at a distance with members geographically dispersed in multiple locations and was crucial for the everyday functioning of their organisations. Senior Manager Andrew described his team as improving their abilities to "read more between what is said and isn't said". Particularly for his virtual organisation of associates working remotely, he relied on verbal and written communication with his team. Without

interactions in-person, making organisational life sensible in this case involved all the rest of the senses. This is similar to the concept of embodied sensemaking through routine narrative performances that Cunliffe and Coupland (2011) generated in their work. The polyphonic nature of members constructing judgements individually and collectively has linkages to Bakhtin's (1981) concept of 'social heteroglossia' and 'double-voiced discourse'. Andrew's reference to being attuned to 'what is said and not said' may reflect Bakhtin's (1981, p.324) notion of double-voiced discourse that is "internally dialogized" with two different meanings expressed concurrently. One's judgement is negotiated and renegotiated in the process of social interplay with other members.

Judgements were socially constructed not only with organisational members but also with external stakeholders to build relationships. For instance, during his fundraising presentations with women's groups, Senior Trustee Cedric would choose to tell more detailed stories about young Zambian girls' efforts to go to school. Depending on who his audience was, and what questions or comments were made, he quickly selected from his collection of stories on-the-spot. Hammersley (1992, p.67) noted "people *construct* the social world, both through their interpretations of it and through the actions based on those interpretations". Cedric was opportunistic that those who could enable change were listening, and he was aware of creating network connections with them. Again, Bakhtin's (1981, p.263) theory of the "multiplicity of social voices" may inform our 'subconscious knowledge' before responding in situations (Holquist, 2002; Maybin, 2001; Shotter, 1993). Similarly, Senior Manager Andrew stated when considering his social enterprise's growth: "[...] you're needing to make these judgement calls between the kind of impact that your organisation is having on its various different kind of stakeholder groups." The multiple voices of stakeholder groups, donors and beneficiaries, and their interplay with senior leaders' inner voices, may have co-constructed their judgements on 'what to do next' during meetings and turning points in the growth of their organisations.

From a reflexive perspective, the interactive approach I took towards interviewing participants also supported this theme. I became another type of stakeholder to participants with whom to build a new trusting relationship. Their understanding of judgement, as was my understanding, was also socially constructed. Particularly with key informants, the most senior leaders of the organisations, our multiple interactions throughout the project entailed self-disclosure of one another and de-emphasized hierarchical differences between researcher and participant, which helped build relationships whilst inviting more open dialogue (Ellis et al., 1997). The descriptive stories respondents shared (see appendix F regarding this auxiliary theme), and I shared with them, (Ellis et al., 1997) were a way to socially construct their understanding of judgement in-the-moment. This, in turn, further deepened my own sensemaking of the

phenomenon. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.178) claim that “what people say and do is produced in the context of a developing sequence of social interaction”. As social actors, we created and re-created meanings of the phenomenon during our interactions to the extent that we sometimes used each other’s words. Bakhtin (1981, p.282) theorised that ‘active understanding’ and response were inseparable, “Understanding comes to fruition only in the response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other”. How participants responded to me required my judgement, in turn, as to how to respond to them, illustrating the interplay of socially constructing our judgements. As a new researcher, this often occurred in situations of uncertainty, which is the focus of the next theme.

Theme 3: Judgement is enacted in uncertain situations

Uncertainty was a common occurrence for these small organisations. Andrew’s interpretation of judgement involved “patterns of information perhaps steered by past experience”. Recognising some sense of pattern may have helped inform decisions and reduce the uncertainty or complexity of situations. To handle these types of situations, Tversky and Kahneman (1974) argued that leaders relied on heuristics, “rules of thumb” or “simplifying strategies” (Bazerman and Moore, 2009, p.6). Also, “being clear” whilst interacting with his team was important in enacting judgements, as was obtaining more information to reduce risks. In this way, judgements could be “more informed”, minimising uncertainty. Betrys also repeatedly mentioned, “I’m very clear”, regarding her assessment of volunteers as the team matched them with assignments in Africa, and in how she advised volunteers later in the field during tentative situations. This phrase refers to judgement as an enactment to reduce risk and bring clarity in both the judgement-making process and the produced judgement (Weick, 1988).

In contrast, for Charity, Cedric spoke of taking risks in building and growing the school, “A matter of faith. You’ve got to take that chance”. He mentioned the Board was uncertain if their Zambian counterpart on the ground would deliver on the agreements made to develop the school. Despite the known (and unknown) risks, ambiguities and uncertainty of operating a school in a developing country, the managerial decisions in this type of environment required judgements on an on-going basis. This link between judgement and sensemaking shares an interest with Wollesenbet and Storey’s (2010) case study on managerial sensemaking of the Ethiopian business environment. Managers may make sense of their environments in different ways depending on their organisational constraints and contexts, such as if they were from the private sector or non-profit.

Interestingly, within the theme of enacting judgement in uncertain situations, I found that participants perceived their judgements to be accurate in retrospect. When I asked Charity Trustee Delwyn if there had been any times when the Board decided something and later thought it was against their better judgement, she replied immediately, “No. No. No. No. No. Don’t think so, no. Cuz it’s – I think everything we do is for the good for other people. You can’t go far wrong if you’re trying to do... good.” Weick (2001) also theorised on post-decision validation as a way that people attempt to justify their situations in terms of socially acceptable reasons and find convincing sources of meaning. He argued that a justification could create a “self-fulfilling prophecy loop” that mutually reinforced both continued action and further support for the justification originally created (Weick, 2001, p.25). Senior Manager Andrew explained, “There’s no right answer, right?” His aim may not have been to find the right answer, but to validate his judgements as ‘more correct’ by being ‘more informed’. This validation happens over time since “many justifications are not fully formed immediately after commitment occurs” (Weick, 2001, p.23). Yet both managers perceived their volunteer match-making process to work out almost every time despite the great difficulty expressed.

Another possibility for the confidence in the accuracy of members’ judgements may be an extensive history of experience in the area that the managers worked. As Trustee Delwyn explained regarding the Board’s collective decision to start a new teacher incentive, “We [on the Board] are all teachers and maybe a similar mindset, that we have no problem in coming to these conclusions.” Although she had retired from teaching, she ‘had been there before’, knew what it was like to be a teacher and this affirmed her judgement. Even I found myself empathising with Senior Trustee Cedric when I accompanied him to fundraising presentations. I used my judgement while he was presenting to step-in, adjust the projector and arrange the equipment according to what would be best for his presentation. I felt comfortable doing this based on my years of public speaking experience and having made numerous presentations with similar equipment in my previous jobs. This perception of accuracy of our judgements due to accumulated past experiences links to the next theme, time and space influencing judgement.

Theme 4: Time and space influence judgement

The fourth theme refers to temporal and spatial influences to social actors’ judgement in the present moment. First, members reflected on past experiences from personal and professional incidents. This focuses explicitly on Weick’s (2001) theory of sensemaking as a retrospective process of recalling and looking back for meaning and ‘what to do next’ (Weick et al., 2005). Operations Manager Betrys described how her previous work experience helped her advise volunteers in the field on their assignments, “I’m really clear and that falls back on my

background, my technical experience, having walked the walk on that, really knowing best practice in how to guide basically.” In the existing literature, Beckett and Hager (2000) observed this as ‘know-how’ gained from the workplace. However, having *pre-formed* judgements based on past experiences was also a concern of Betrys’s, “But one element I’ve been considering recently, about *not* taking with me, is a pre-made-up decision. [Laughs] Thinking, ‘ok, I’m going to go into this situation open’. Actually, I’m going to go into this situation with a load of thinking ‘this person is this’ [laughs] or ‘I’ve decided this is the way it’s going to be’. And it’s so subtle to do that. So I’ve just been really aware of that and not doing that.” Although her vast past experiences guided her in her day-to-day responsibilities and decisions, she was aware that what happened at a previous time and place may shape her judgement in a present situation.

For Trustee Delwyn, reflecting on “different threads of things from your experience” to form judgements was beyond the workplace and included family and personal life experiences. When I inquired how she made sense of judgement and how she reached certain decisions, she replied, “Judgement comes from – from the day you were born, I think. The rules and the expectations laid down by your family. You know, the way you were brought up. You say some people’s judgements are faulty, but it’s their judgement that they’ve been brought and grown up with. It moulds judgement and decision-making I think.” For Delwyn, it was not only places and events but also people from her past on which she reflected. “[...] It paints your character I think, other people. Especially people you’re close to. And I find myself, she [mum] passed on in 2006, ‘What would mum do?’ ‘What would mum say?’ you know. The influence is still there.”

Casting an eye on the past was not independent from keeping an eye on the future as well. A complementary sub-theme that unfolded was a tendency to also look forward to create future opportunities for their organisations. Trustee Cedric has been in his position for ten years and admitted to not having a leadership succession plan for Charity. Also a retired teacher, his judgement to focus more on “keeping it going” financially was more urgent at present, as he described to me his diary full of meetings one week, donor presentations and paperwork, such as writing grant applications. As we arrived to the location of one of his meetings with a donor group, he confessed to not having a formal plan about what he was going to present to them. To guide his speech he used the same PowerPoint® slideshow at every meeting, filled with colourful photographs of the Zambian students, school grounds and village. It served as both a timeline and storyline for his presentation. His judgement in-the-moment entailed deciding what stories to tell according to the interests of the audience, what type of questions they asked and what questions he had frequently been asked. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.180) argued, “Past, present and future are created and re-created together as actors share memories, plans or

projects”. When I asked how he decided to go more in depth with a story or details about Charity, he stated, “It’s all about opportunism. You never know someone there might say, well I’d like to do something else for you.” He aimed to “plant a seed in their mind” at each event, leave them with an idea and see what opportunities may grow from it in the future, such as a new fundraising project or sponsorship of a Zambian teacher. Casting one eye on the past and one eye on the future is also related to Weick’s (1988, 2001) theory that we may consider past and future consequences as we continuously act and interpret situations.

In Betrys’s role in Social Enterprise, managing safety and security of the volunteers during their assignments meant being ‘on call’ at all hours of the day. Although crisis situations did not happen often, her judgement in responding to them was imperative to the organisations’ core programme. “Also we have a lot of plans to fall back on, so it’s just supporting that [assignee] in-the-moment and making sure they’re absolutely clear on best guidance. [...] And it reflects in their well-being as well as the continuance of the programme.” This signifies the convergence of drawing on previous experiences and pre-arranged contingency plans with future prospects to sustain the programme whilst forming judgements in the present moment. Bakhtin emphasised concepts of time and space, influenced by Einstein’s Relativity Theory, (Holquist, 2002), particularly in his essay ‘The *Bildungsroman*’ analysing Goethe’s works (Bakhtin, 1986). He noted the inseparability of time and space (the specific place where an event occurred) and “the merging of time (past with present)” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.41). This finding suggests that using judgement in-the-moment involves the connection of temporal, both past and future, and spatial contexts of a situation.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.180) also advocate to ethnographers, “actions are embedded in temporal contexts and these may shape them in ways that are important for the analysis”. Reflecting on how this emergent theme applied to myself in the field, I often used my judgement in-the-moment and considered my past experiences and future consequences to my actions. For example, whilst shadowing Cedric during his fundraising events, I had the choice to either sit and be passive, or to be active and help with tidying up after the event. I chose the latter based on my previous work experience in many community service roles as a volunteer and also my desire to build trust and rapport and maintain contact for my future study.

Summary

Many themes emerged from my findings, but four main recurring ones aligned with my research question, supported by existing literature, and described how the four participants made sense of judgement. First, participants gave various interpretations of judgement as to

what it meant to them. There was no unanimity, nor was it intended to be reached, with the diverse perspectives of judgement: an action with the freedom to decide to act or not; 'self-authorised'; a personal opinion formed from a 'balancing act'; an ability that could be improved; and concerning ethics and morals. Second, participants depicted a socially constructed process involved in judgement-making in-the-moment. Trusting, talking and listening were a part of judgement and decision-making amongst organisational members, as they also were with external stakeholders to build relationships. Third, judgement was enacted in uncertain situations with aims of being more informed, yet with perceptions of being accurate, even though there was no single right answer. Last, time and space influenced judgements. Participants looked back at threads of past experiences and forward to create future opportunities.

I have included my reflections on these themes and also discussed my findings in relation to the relevant literature. However, my own sensemaking and interpretations of the findings have limitations. This next, final, chapter will reflect further on these limitations and lessons learnt, as well as the validity, other issues encountered and implications of my study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The interpretations of my findings are limited to the sample and methods I used (Blaxter et al., 2010). However, I agree with Blaxter, Hughes and Tight's (2010, p.245) statement that, "Small-scale research has its limitations, but is also able to make a significant contribution in understudied areas". This chapter will conclude with the validity, limitations, methodological issues, ethical and practical, and implications of my research.

Validity

With no consensus amongst qualitative researchers on how to verify or legitimize qualitative research, a variety of terms have emerged to translate validity and reliability issues from the positivist paradigm (Creswell, 1994; Maxwell, 1992; Module A, MRes). Van Maanen (1988, p.33) suggests standards of "fidelity, coherence, generosity, wisdom, imagination, honest, respect and verisimilitude" in ethnographies. Maxwell (1992, p.42) states "validity is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose". Other criteria assessed are the 'plausibility' and 'credibility' of the findings of social research (Module A, MRes). Bryman and Bell (2003) also state credibility as a main criterion for assessing validity and include 'transferability', 'dependability' and 'confirmability'. I will discuss these latter five

criteria to claim ‘authenticity’ for my research (as Lincoln and Guba [1989, cited in Maxwell 1992] suggest aiming for in qualitative studies).

Plausibility and credibility refer to the extent to which evidence of data collection and the findings and interpretations of them are compelling (Module A, MRes). “We must judge its plausibility in terms of our existing knowledge. If it is very plausible, then we may simply accept it at face value. If not, we must assess its credibility” (Module A, MRes, p.104). To increase credibility, I triangulated methods by collecting data through a combination of observations and unstructured interviews. For instance, observations noted what participants ‘usually do’ in actual situations and interviews uncovered underlying meanings and sometimes what they ‘would like to do’ (for example when Cedric stated in our interview after I observed his meeting with donors, “What I’d like to say – but never will – is [...]”). Moreover, interviews were an opportunity to gain further insight on participants’ understanding of judgement. Interviews with less vocal organisational members also verified contextual information, provided further perceptions and avoided relying solely on the key informants’ views. I tried to present a balance of supporting evidence in my analysis from all participants, as opposed to mainly from the dominant voices of the most senior leaders. In chapters 3 and 4, I intended to be transparent in outlining the research process, from gaining access to collecting and analysing data. “Stronger data” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.268) was incorporated to improve research quality by my efforts to check for accuracy in audio-recordings, sustain repeated contact with participants over a continuous two-month period in the field, use supporting data collected after establishing trust with key informants, and conduct unstructured interviews alone with participants (with the exception of one, which will be described in the next section). Finally, I met with my three supervisors monthly from January to July to continuously review my project (Creswell, 2003). As experienced researchers external to the project, they posed specific questions to assess the credibility and overall research integrity and authenticity.

Transferability raises the question of how generalizable the findings may be applied to other contexts other than those in the sample I studied (Bryman and Bell, 2003). This has also been referred to as external validity (Creswell, 1994; McGrath and Brinberg, 1983). My intention was not to claim generalizability for the findings beyond the small international development organisations in my study to a broader population of organisations of any type. Although the findings may be relatable to similar contexts, there is no transferability or generalizability to this research due to the limits of interpreting the same emergent themes unique to the cases investigated. However, the methodology and protocols of data collection and analysis may be usable in other research contexts (Creswell, 1994), for example in other types of social enterprises.

The issue of dependability tests the ‘stability’ of the research process (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and if the findings could apply at another time (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Van Maanen (1988, p.4-6) argues ethnographies are “interpretative acts” that are “experientially driven”, and “ethnographic conventions are historically situated and change over time”. To strengthen dependability, I used two cases or sites to examine the thematic concepts within and across international development organisational contexts (Creswell, 1994; Yin, 1984 cited in Bryman and Bell, 2003). I conducted fieldwork over a continuous two-month period. However, the same findings cannot be guaranteed to emerge at other times in the same participating organisations or different ones. This is due to the dynamic nature of social contexts, organisations, respondents and myself; the persons they were or I was may not be the same at another point in time. My findings are the results of my own interpretations and judgements as a researcher and ‘multiple selves’ in the field, which are related to the next, and final, issue of ‘confirmability’.

Confirmability scrutinizes if researchers have acknowledged their own biases and how they affect their research (Bryman and Bell, 2003). I was continually aware of how my presence in the field may have shaped my data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In chapter 3, I discussed the reflexive approach taken in this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) state potential sources of bias are the researcher’s effects on the case(s) *and* the case(s)’s effects on the researcher. The multiple selves I ‘brought’ to the field and ‘created’ whilst in the field impacted my study, just as participants impacted me and my judgements and interpretations (Reinharz, 1997). In Reinharz’s (1997, p.5) fieldwork on a kibbutz, she identified three categories of selves: “research-based selves”, “brought selves” and “situationally created selves”. Applying these categories to my study, there were a number of selves that were significant to influencing my research.

Being a student/academic researcher, I was someone interested in my participants’ organisations and their work; someone who listened to their opinions; and someone who was temporarily present on the scene with a low profile. For example, during my observations of Cedric at his meetings with donors, we agreed I would not participate in his presentations, so I tried to be unobtrusive in the background. This attempted to minimise bias from researcher effects (Miles and Huberman, 1994). However, interactive interviews were times of two-way sharing and my ‘research-based self’ likely influenced (in ways both known and unknown to me) their responses, as they influenced my responses, and the data I collected.

My *brought selves* were being foreign, young, female and a former practitioner. Being Chinese-American and non-British, participants saw me as an ‘outsider looking in’. In addition, being a

‘young woman’, and perhaps looking even younger than my age, carried an innocence and non-threatening presence. To relate to participants and build rapport, I intentionally disclosed my background. I mentioned I was a former Peace Corps Volunteer (a US government agency for international assistance) and participants were familiar with these aid workers in the countries where they worked. This came with some acknowledgement of having worked ‘in the field’ for two years with natives. It also came with some negative stereotypes from unruly volunteers they may have encountered and I found myself emphasising that I was not like those volunteers. Being a former coach/counselor and a former practitioner in education, social enterprises and NGOs, also may have presented an empathetic, non-threatening presence for participants to speak openly about themselves, their current issues and future concerns. However, my empathy in understanding their experiences due to my background also brought challenges of remembering not to fall into my former counselling role as a researcher.

The *situationally created selves* were being an observer and the observed, being a stakeholder and supporter of participants’ organisations. As I became more involved with the organisations, I became a new kind of affiliate and advocate. With Charity, I was a volunteer and helper when I accompanied Cedric to his fundraising talks. However, I was also an observer, an outsider, not a true member. Although this may have allowed participants to speak as ease since I was not a part of their direct network, this did not dismiss the possibility that they may have put up fronts or held back on expressing themselves in fear of being judged. I became aware of this when Cedric once said lightheartedly, “I wonder what she’s going to write about us.” At times I was being observed and became the subject, a juxtaposition I had not anticipated. How participants responded to me as an ‘actor’ and ‘audience’, and I responded to them, were additional forms of field data (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.177).

In summary, the conclusions to my study are based on my interpretations and judgements of the meanings I imposed to the data. They are partial accounts of the phenomena since other accounts could plausibly have been produced emphasising alternative aspects of the research. I have attempted to integrate participants’ voices, but I acknowledge that what I have reported is also taken from my perspective of the social world taking into consideration the multiple selves I brought to the field and created there too (Hertz, 1997). This has implications to the plausibility, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of my findings. This also brings limitations and methodological issues to my research, which will be discussed next.

Limitations and other methodological issues

One limitation of the study may be lower dependability of the findings from a sample of two different types of organisations (a registered charity and a private limited company). In cross-case analysis, the implications of temporal and spatial contexts must be taken into account. Different resource constraints and organisational priorities may have influenced how leaders perceived their judgements. If I were to start over, I would have sampled organisations of the same type, such as only charities. Second, I would have ‘cased’ the study differently. This study investigated the phenomenon in a broad sense, but for the PhD project I would draw more distinct boundaries of investigating judgement in a particular context, such as specific projects from start to finish or a functional area (e.g. strategy or human resources). This pilot helped me to understand how to better contain the enquiry.

The inherent differences in the two participating organisations led to other limitations regarding methods and participant relationships. McGrath and Brinberg (1983) argue that all methods have their own flaws and limitations and advocate using multiple methods. I employed both observations and interviews, but I conducted observations in different ways in each organisation according to their everyday ways of working. For instance, since Social Enterprise was a ‘virtual company’ I never met my participants face-to-face. Although virtual offices are common in today’s small and medium-sized organisations to minimise administrative expenses by leveraging advances in Internet technology, the absence of the visual sense may have concealed additional cues of the phenomenon during fieldwork. Relying mainly on discourse in this case also required more frequent contact. I felt it took a longer time to establish rapport with participants in the virtual space of Social Enterprise than it did with Charity trustees since meetings were not face-to-face. However, exploring methodologies and methods to gather lessons learnt was the secondary aim of the study. In the future, I would meet with participants in person at the beginning of the access negotiation stage and then continue with subsequent interactions from the virtual operations that they were accustomed to using. This may improve the quality of the relationships built later during fieldwork ‘from a distance’. I also noticed that, although I found it difficult to leave the field with both organisations after constant contact over two months, it was harder to detach myself from Charity. This may have reflected the difference in quality of the relationships built in-person as opposed to never having met Social Enterprise members face-to-face (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The senses link to additional limitations regarding observations and interviews as methods for researching judgement in practice. My primary concerns from the inception of the project were about the difficulties of ‘observing’ someone form judgements and how that can be debated (particularly in virtual organisations). I dealt with this during the research design stage by

clarifying the research question to emphasise what judgement in-the-moment meant to participants rather than explicating how to 'see' or 'hear' judgement-making. Limitations to interviews may be participants' incapability of articulating their views in words particularly whilst conversing with a stranger, (Alvesson, 2011), or they may be capable but "consciously or unconsciously distort or conceal their views" (Maxwell, 1992, p.49). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.176) also warn that "interviewee's conceptions of the nature and purposes of social research, of the particular research project, and of the personal characteristics of the interview may, therefore, act as a strong influence on what they say, and how they say it". Last, the challenge of the "interview society" in which we live (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Silverman, 2006) where extensive media coverage and the use of interviews have become common stages for informants' 'performances' may be problematic. My attempt to overcome these issues was to engage in interactive dialogue, clearly explain the purpose and encourage a natural 'flow' of conversation as much as possible (Ellis et al., 1997). Nonetheless, some respondents were more eloquent and others less articulate, some overly eager to speak and others more timid.

Inviting a more timid participant from Charity to share her views presented unexpected practical and ethical issues as well as risk to validity. As previously mentioned, I interviewed additional members to balance voice and gender in each organisation. Key informant Cedric arranged my meeting with Delywn, the other full-time trustee and his long-term friend, in a large restaurant where the three of us first met when I introduced my project to them. Upon Delwyn's arrival, I was surprised to see that she brought a friend with her, whom she introduced as Cedric's wife. I had to act quickly and use my best judgement in-the-moment to handle the situation. If I asked her to leave, I would risk being perceived as unfriendly and news travelling back to Cedric (possibly affecting our relationship). I decided to remain flexible and portray informality to keep everyone at ease and said it was not a problem for her to stay. From the beginning of our meeting, I sensed that Delwyn was anxious or unsure about being 'interviewed' so I proposed that we sit in the part of the restaurant with comfortable couches instead of at a dining table. The original issue of how I, as the researcher, may impact what she said now added an additional concern. I was concerned about how the presence of her friend might influence what she said to me, since "different things will be said and done in different company" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.178). Although her friend did not interject much, she commented briefly at the end of the interview. Since she was not a Charity trustee, I decided not to ask her for consent as another participant. Therefore, I could not ethically include her comments in the data. Nevertheless, her presence turned out to help rather than hinder the interview despite my apprehensions. She alleviated any anxiety Delwyn may have had and brought informality to the occasion. We were three ladies having a conversation over coffee sharing perceptions and laughter.

The limitations and practical and ethical issues to my study are lessons learnt and can be applied to future research on judgement in organisations. The implications of my findings and directions for further research will be the final discussion.

Implications for future research

My exploratory study brings methodological and theoretical implications to the scholarship and practice of judgement. Methodologically, incorporating a reflexive approach to the research design that is interactive and collaborative, rather than formally structured interviews and observations, can stimulate deep insight from both researcher and participants on the understanding of an abstract phenomenon that is not often pondered or conversed. My judgement as a researcher was an integral part of investigating this phenomenon. The original research question was to explore how practicing managers made sense of using their judgement 'in-the-moment'. The findings of my research contained stronger reflexive conclusions than I expected. I share with Hertz (1997, p.xi) that "serious examinations of the self should make researchers aware of being both subject and object, thus empowering them to a deeper understanding of themselves and their respondents". As I became more immersed in the fieldwork, I became the subject and object, a part of the social construction and understanding of judgement in-the-making. In my future research, I would add another research question that incorporated my own judgement throughout the study and the effects of researcher as subject and object. Participants made judgements as I also did, such as whether or not to interrupt and ask to audio-record during a spontaneous conversation or when to probe them further about a topic we were discussing. They, in turn, made judgements to speak or not or to determine what to say, all constructed in the temporal context of the situation. I affected them as they affected me. I became more and more conscious of my own judgement, my self-authorised act to say or do something. Future research from this reflexive perspective could explore methods, such as researcher diaries as a participant observer and temporary member of an organisation.

Theoretically, my findings add to the sensemaking and judgement literature from a social constructionist perspective. Complementing the literature with this additional perspective contributes to our understanding of how judgement in-the-moment is perceived by senior managers in the everyday context of small international development organisations. With internal and external stakeholders geographically dispersed across multiple locations, often in developing countries in transition with risks and ambiguities, managers' exercising 'good' judgement is needed on an on-going basis. My analysis generated four themes that build new knowledge on the phenomenon: (1) diverse interpretations of judgement, (2) judgement is a

socially constructed process, (3) judgement is enacted in uncertain situations and (4) temporal and spatial influences. These can be used as a guide for further studies, such as to explore collective judgements or mindfulness of judgement. Although this pilot was not aimed to make prescriptive recommendations for practice, additional research could be on improving mindfulness of our judgements. As one senior leader confessed, “It’s useful to have these conversations because it helps me think about how we make decisions really”. My hope is to build on the lessons learnt during my PhD phase, as well as stimulate future research with reflexive and interactional approaches.

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Appendix A: Email introduction to organisations

From: joanne.vincett

Subject: Invitation to participate in research with The Open University

Dear [name withheld]

Greetings from Bangor. I learned about your organisation from the Wales Africa Community Links website and am most impressed with the work you are doing. I am a post-graduate student at the Open University based in Bangor and Milton Keynes. I'm working on a research project that is a pilot project for my PhD commencing in October. I am researching people that manage social enterprises and how they make everyday judgements as they take decisions. I am particularly interested in [name withheld] because I want to highlight UK organisations, especially those based in Wales to support the WACL programme, that are working on international development initiatives, particularly education and poverty eradication. This sector has been my passion and interest for years as I was a former Peace Corps Volunteer in the West Indies (which is similar to VSO but from the USA government and a two-year stint).

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. May we set up a time to chat on the phone next week at a convenient time for you? I would like to explain what is involved and learn what would be most useful for [name withheld] in exchange for your time if you decide to take part. I have attached my CV so you can see my background.

Yours sincerely

Jo Vincett



Researching how leaders in social enterprises use their judgement
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Appendix B: Research project information and consent form

Research Project Information and Consent Form for Participants

Project Title: Judgement in day-to-day managing of social enterprises

Summary: My research interests are how managers and other organisational members of social enterprises make sense of using their judgement in moment-to-moment situations. In order to study this, I would like to observe their daily interactions at work and discuss with participants afterwards about their reflections and thoughts about how they reached decisions. I have chosen this topic from my personal interest and background in NGOs, not-for-profit and voluntary organisations. I have purposefully selected Welsh-based organisations with international development initiatives, such as yours, to learn and benefit from each other during this project.

**The Open University
Business School**

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MK7 6AA

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Time commitment: I will be 'on site' at your work location(s) for a total of three to five business days. This time will be agreed upon based on what is convenient in your diary, as will a debrief conversation towards the end of the five days that will last approximately one hour.

Role of the Researcher: The purpose of my research is educational – to learn how to carry out stages in the research process. My role as a researcher is to learn from you and your organisation through observation that is unobtrusive and through discussions with you during my visits. My role is *not* to evaluate or criticise your performance or behaviours. In short, I am like a 'fly on the wall' and observe people at work and then have a conversation with them about 'what they do'. I will share with all participants a final report of my research.

Role of the Participant: I would ask you, as a participant, to be your natural self, carry out your daily work activities and to be honest in expressing your views during our debrief meeting. We will pre-arrange this discussion held in private. To ensure accuracy, our discussion will be audio-recorded with your permission. I will send you a copy of my preliminary write-up so that you may re-confirm accuracy of the transcripts.

Confidentiality: Any personal names will be anonymous; you have a choice to disclose your organisation's name. The information you provide will be used for educational or research purposes, including written reports and presentations to share what has been learned from the project and to further encourage building knowledge on the topic. I adhere to confidentiality terms associated with data and compliance under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts, as well as the OU Code of Practice for Research and Ethics Principles (<http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/index.shtml>) and Economic and Social Research Council's 'Framework for Research Ethics' (<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/research-ethics.aspx>). Personal data will be separated out and stored on the University's secured servers, not on desktops or public or shared folders.

You have the opportunity to withdraw from the study any time before 30 May 2012. (This date is due to the University's cut-off date for submitting the final report.) There are no positive or negative consequences to your participation.

Costs and compensation: There will not be any extraordinary travel costs incurred for participants since I will be travelling to your work location(s) and will bear those costs. If for some reason there are travel expenses incurred, you will be reimbursed. Additionally, if your organisation is a charity I would like to offer the equivalent time in voluntary work to recompense the time we spend in our discussions.

Supervisors and contact details: If you have enquiries about any matters, please feel free to contact my supervisors in The Open University Business School Faculty:

Dr Caroline Ramsey, current primary supervisor and future PhD supervisor
c.m.ramsey@open.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1908 654 758

Dr Alexis Wright, current secondary supervisor and future PhD supervisor
a.d.wright@open.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1908 655 878

Professor Paul Quintas, current advisor
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Yours sincerely

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Participation Agreement

I, *[print name]* _____ agree to take part in Jo Vincett's research project as a participant. She has explained the purposes of the project to me. I have read and understand the roles and responsibilities of the researcher and participant. I have been informed that I may withdraw from the project any time before 30 May 2012 by simply saying so.

I have been assured that my confidentiality will be protected as specified in this letter. I agree that the information I provide can be used for educational, further research and published articles, such as in academic journals. I assign the copyright for my contribution to the Open University for these purposes. I understand that if I have any questions or concerns about this project, I can contact the researcher or her supervisors listed above.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____



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Appendix C: The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Approval



The Open University

From Dr Duncan Banks
Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee
Email d.banks@open.ac.uk
Extension 59198

To Joanne Vincett, OUBS (MRes)
Subject *"Judgement in day-to-day managing of social enterprises"*
Ref HREC/2012/#1169/1
Red form
Submitted 16 March 2012
Date 18 April 2012

Memorandum

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, **is approved** by the Open University Human Research Ethics.

Please make sure that any question(s) relating to your application and approval are sent to Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk quoting the HREC reference number. We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible so that your research is not delayed in any way.

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Regards,

Dr Duncan Banks
Chair OU HREC

Appendix D: Profiles of the two participating UK-headquartered organisations

	Social enterprise (Organisation 1)	Charity (Organisation 2)
Incorporation	2004	2001
Organisation type	Social entrepreneurship/ Private Limited Company	Charity
Annual return (year end 30 Mar 2011)	£38,806 ¹	£13,326 in income £15,682 in spending ²
Funding	Income-generating services	Donations and grants
Team pay structure	All paid contract associates, not shareholders or employees ³	All non-paid UK trustees and Zambian coordinator
Team work structure	Virtual/home offices; Skype and mobile phone conference calls	Virtual/home offices; face-to-face and mobile phone conference calls
Team member locations	Cameroon, Uganda, Wales, Zambia	Wales, Zambia
Partner organisation(s) locations	Cameroon, Lesotho, Uganda, Zambia	Zambia
Programme foci	Programme management and logistics for Welsh public sector employees' leadership development assignments in host countries on various social impact themes, e.g. environment, women's empowerment, economic development	Zambian secondary school and adult education in rural village (outside of public school system); and Zambian teacher training; Welsh secondary students' service-learning trips to school in host country

¹ Net worth as reported by bizzy from publicly available details from The Registrar of Companies, retrieved 12 June 2012 from bizzy.co.uk.

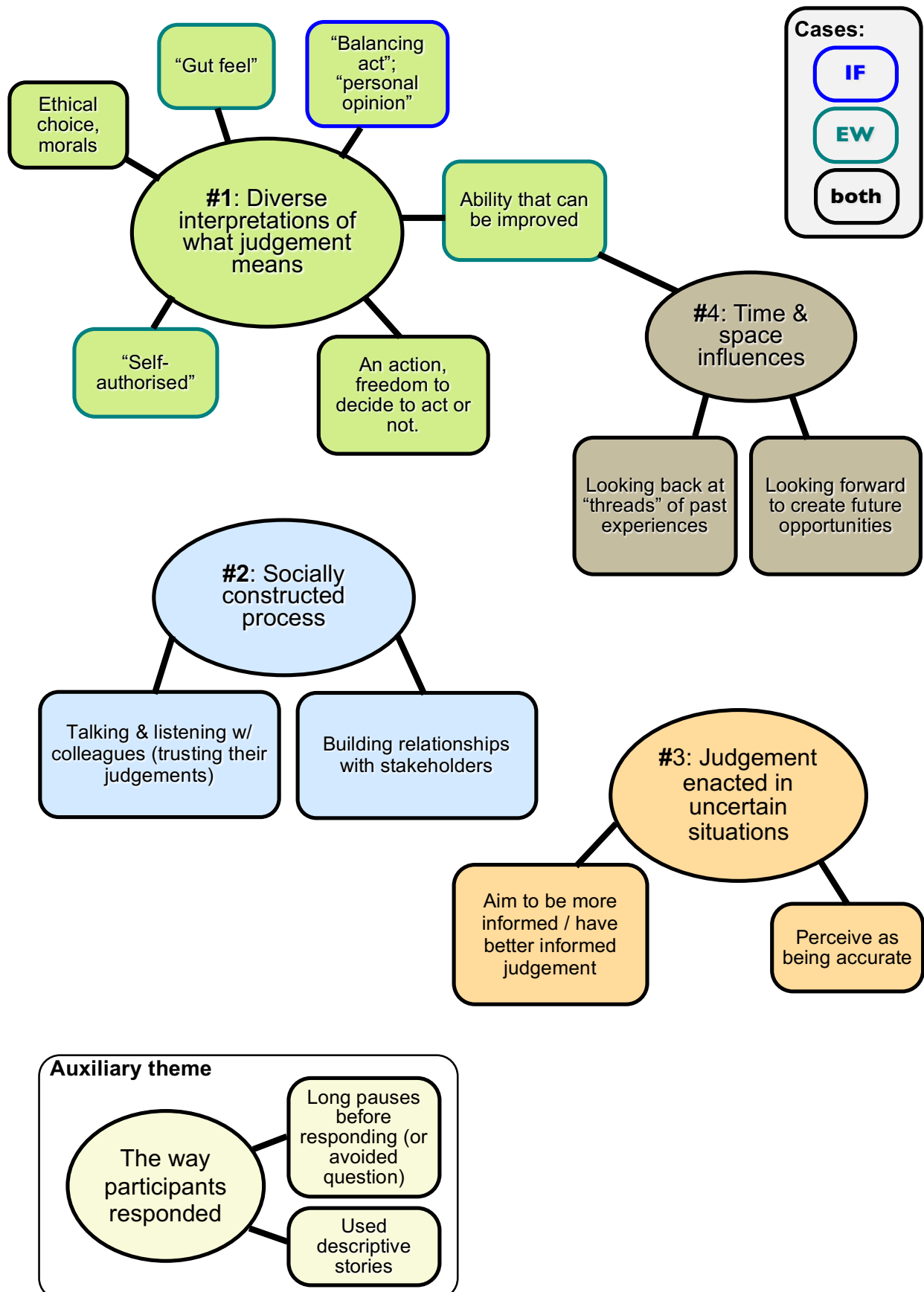
² As reported by the Charity Commission, retrieved 12 June 2012 from www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

³ Social entrepreneur is the single shareholder.

Appendix E: Overview of participants

Name	Gender	Position	Participatory role	Number of observation days	Number of interviews	Mode of contact
Social Enterprise (Organisation 1)						
Andrew	Male	Senior manager	Key informant and interviewee	4	4	Skype
Betrys	Female	Operations manager	Interviewee	--	1	Skype
Charity (Organisation 2)						
Cedric	Male	Senior Trustee	Key informant and interviewee	3	3	In-person
Delwyn	Female	Trustee	Interviewee	--	1	In-person

Appendix F: Thematic map illustrating four main themes



Appendix G: Framework of first-order categories and second-order themes

First-order categories

Second-order themes

- An action with the freedom to decide to act or not
- Self-authorised
- A personal opinion formed from a 'balancing act'
- An ability that can be improved
- Involves ethics and morals
- A 'gut feel'

Diverse interpretations of judgement

- Trusting, talking and listening with colleagues and coming to a decision
- Building relationships with stakeholders

Judgement is a socially constructed process

- Aims of being more informed when there's no right answer
- Perceptions of accuracy

Judgement is enacted in uncertain situations

- Looking back at threads of past experiences
- Looking forward to create future opportunities

Time and space influence judgements

Appendix H: Second-order themes with supporting extracts from first-order data

Theme 1: Diverse interpretations of judgement	
An action with the freedom to decide to act or not	<p>"Now the thing is, if you are a company like mine, where you don't have an obligation to shareholders to make lots of money. It's basically about the judgements that the owners of the company want to make about when [and] what direction they go. You have much more - you have a freedom to decide, where you should invest your time, and when you should prioritize profit and when you should prioritise other aspects of your business. You know, you make these judgements. And it's really important to do that." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"What I'd like to say - but never will - is that, 'what does it matter?' You know, if you've got an education, your quality of life has changed irrespective of what you're doing immediately." (Cedric, Senior Trustee, Charity)</p>
'Self-authorised'	"We just had an assignee come back, he was so entrepreneurial about what he did. He stood up in such a major way, [...] And I think every assignee can do that. And it's self-authorised." (Betrys, Operations Manager, Social Enterprise)
A personal opinion formed from a 'balancing act'	"Judgement... hmmm... I think it's a fine balancing act at times, isn't it? You try not to be blinkered and just look at one part, you try to have an overall picture. And then it's very much your own opinion what decision you come to. [...] Judgement is such a personal thing." (Delwyn, Trustee, Charity)
An ability that can be improved	"In all of our work with organisations, I kind of feel that ultimately it's people are the difference, right? So... you've got two ideas on this. You either look at 'it's a system' or 'it's people', if you like. And I'm sure there's lots of interplay between the two, but you know, you think you've got to change the system or do you think you can change the people, in order to change the way the world works. And I kind of think that, well it's the people that create systems. So you can change the people. And our leadership development and the experiences that we provide, in terms of our idea of social change, providing people with a more enlightened experiences that will guide their judgement." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)
Involves ethics and morals	<p>"I don't think you can talk about judgement without ethics and morality." (Delwyn, Trustee, Charity)</p> <p>"I think we're fairly duty bound after we get this money. I'll give it six months and then circulate to them some form of newsletter to them and say thank you and this is what we've done with the money." (Cedric, Senior Trustee, Charity)</p> <p>"I might need to strictly encourage them about something. And I think that's being really respectful to that person to do that. And it can be hard to do that. But I feel, yeah I'm not going to get into, um, 'wrongly' supporting people when actually it's part of their learning journey." (Betrys, Operations Manager, Social Enterprise)</p>

	"The other thing is that we have perhaps a duty to support the partners that we're already working with more by sending more people to them." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)
A 'gut feel'	"You can use other ways to calculate, you can evaluate, and do pros and cons and sometimes you just need to make some kind of real gut feels, you know, judgement has a sense of... it's, yeah, patterns of information perhaps steered by past experience." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)
Theme 2: Judgement is a socially constructed process	
Trusting, talking and listening with colleagues and coming to a decision	<p>"We're much more attuned to what we need. We're able to read a lot more between what is said and isn't said. Yeah. Read more from what's said and isn't said than we ever used to be. Which is important because we're making that decision whether to send Simon to Uganda or to Zambia. And the fact that a colleague's sort of saying, Well I'm not sure whether it will be a good match for him or not, or yeah I'm not sure it's well enough defined or not. These are... (pause) um, you can say, ok, If he's saying that, then we need to listen to that." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"Judgement is a very abstract thing. Judgement I suppose is how you come to a decision, and it's with talking with other people on the committee and listening to them." (Delwyn, Trustee, Charity)</p> <p>Cedric explained to me that it took 12 months of talking and negotiating with Alfred (colleague in Zambia) before establishing the school. He did not want to promise something that he could not deliver. "You need someone trustworthy, honest, motivated. You have to take it on trust. You build up trust." (Fieldnotes, Cedric, Senior Trustee, Charity)</p>
Building relationships with stakeholders	<p>"I just think that perhaps the social enterprise grows, you're not just using it [judgement] for kind of the evaluating how the company should go forward, but I think you're needing to make these judgement calls between the kind of impact that your organisation is having on its various different kind of stakeholder groups." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"They [donor groups] get requests for funding for different things and they don't have any real contact with those organisations. [...] Whereas with going and doing a presentation... In fact they feel it's more real and they can feel some sort of ownership." (Cedric, Senior Trustee, Charity)</p>
Theme 3: Judgement is enacted in uncertain situations	
Aims of being more informed when there's no right answer	<p>"There's no right answer, right? You've got to make a judgement. You've got to make a judgement based on that. And the more informed that you are, or the more times you've been involved in those kinds of decisions, the more situations you've been exposed to, the better your judgement should be, in general." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"We're not just going to judge it on that [pre-assessment workshop] because we don't have to, we get to meet them twice kind of thing, and spend a whole day with them. Two whole days with them. Then we kind of get to see more clearer." (Betrys, Operations Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"I think it's the not being blinkered, trying to get an overall view and</p>

	come to an informed decision, using your judgement." (Delwyn, Trustee, Charity)
Perceptions of accuracy	<p>"Not everybody [on the team] knows everything. Making matches can be difficult." He looks for feelings of "Yeah, I've got a good gut instinct". Although he states there is no way of proving the right matches were made, he tells me "It usually works out." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>When I asked if there had been any times when the Committee thought that they had decided something that turned out to be against their better judgement, she replied immediately: "No. No. No. No. No. Don't think so, no. Cuz it's - I think everything we do is for the good for other people. You can't go far wrong if you're trying to do... good." (Fieldnotes, Delwyn, Trustee, Charity)</p>
Theme 4: Time and space influence judgements	
Looking back at threads of past experiences	<p>"I'm really clear and that falls back on my background, my technical experience, having walked the walk on that, really knowing best practice in how to guide basically. [...] I also know the potential of the learning experience you can have in that context. I've supported a lot of people direct through all kinds of experience in crazy places in the world, so it gives me a real grounding to come from basically, so a part of it is experiential." (Betrys, Operations Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"So... the judgement is... working with a new partner is more time-consuming and is more risky than working with a partner you've already worked with. And that's been born through the experience of years. [...] So it's judgement based on experience." (Andrew, Senior Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"It's just - drive on different threads of things from your experience. [...] I don't know... little snippets of things that you've learnt along the road. It doesn't come out of any book. It doesn't come out of any lecture." (Delwyn, Trustee, Charity)</p>
Looking forward to create future opportunities	<p>"Also we have a lot of plans to fall back on, so it's just supporting that [assignee] in-the-moment and making sure they're absolutely clear on best guidance. [...] And it reflects in their well-being as well as the continuance of the programme." (Betrys, Operations Manager, Social Enterprise)</p> <p>"It's all about opportunism. You never know someone there might say, well I'd like to do something else for you [fundraising or donating]." (Cedric, Senior Trustee, Charity)</p>

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